Engraving by Venturini (1685): the so-called Fountain of the Swans, built in the lower part of the garden shortly after the death of Cardinal Ippolito. The putti and geese which once belonged to the main fountain of the Grotto of Venus are visible.

Beforehand he sponsored a completion and restoration campaign which according to the manuscript preserved in the Modena Archives cost him 26.000 *scudi*. The addition of new fountains such as the Fountain of Venus by the Organ Fountain and the Swan Fountain at the far end of the garden, the replacements and switching around, such as the Jupiter in place of the Hercules and the Bacchus in place of Venus, so greatly altered the thematic links among the sculptures that the original scheme of their symbolic meanings was upset to the point of losing all consistency.

The times, from the death of Ippolito to the advent of his descendant Alessandro, had greatly changed. The authority of the d'Estes was waning in both the political and cultural spheres, while at the same time the Renaissance *Weltanschauung*, based upon Humanistic ideals and re-evocations of the pagan world were being replaced by the Counter-Reformation's much harsher viewpoint, according to which the original concept, so very profane, seemed utterly out of place. Indeed it is likely that the modifications made by Alessandro d'Este, with the resulting loss of the celebrative symbolism that had originally inspired the design of the villa, hardly came about by accident. We can only reconstruct — as best we can through documents — the whole and the details so that we may rediscover the spirit with which it was conceived and only partially brought to life.